

Year. He joins many deserving honorees across the state and will certainly be a serious contender. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize Tyler Martinez, today, and I have no doubt this young man will continue to be a leader in his community.

#### HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY

### HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 17, 2011*

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, Happy St. Patrick's Day! Originally a religious holiday, today St. Patrick's Day is largely an international celebration of Irish culture. I urge my colleagues and fellow Americans to embrace this day. Today, one in four Americans traces at least part of their ancestry to Ireland. Irish-Americans have provided the backbone of our workforce, enlivened our art and culture, defended our country, and served in this Congress and as President of the United States. Great Irish-Americans such as Eugene O'Neill and F. Scott Fitzgerald transformed American literature, innovators like Henry Ford helped revolutionize American transportation, and who can forget Presidents like Andrew Jackson, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, and Ronald Reagan, each Irish-American alike. Irish-Americans continue to contribute to our nation as they ably serve in their communities in numerous capacities. It is for all of these reasons that I support the designation of March as Irish-American Heritage Month and encourage Americans to celebrate Irish-American heritage. I'm proud to stand today with my colleagues, those lucky enough to be Irish-American, as well as those who aren't, and honor this group that has been so important to our nation on this St. Patrick's Day.

#### INTRODUCING THE THRIFT SAVINGS FUND IMPROVEMENT ACT

### HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 17, 2011*

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Thrift Savings Fund Improvement Act. This legislation expands the investment options available to congressional and other federal employees by creating a precious metals investment fund in the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). Adding a precious metals fund to the TSP will enhance the plan's ability to offer congressional employees a wide range of investment options that can provide financial security even during difficult economic conditions.

The Thrift Savings Plan is one of the most important benefits offered to Congressional employees. A strong TSP can obviously play a key role in attracting and retaining talented individuals to serve in the legislative branch. Adding a precious metals option will strengthen the TSP. In the last year, the price of gold rose by over 23 percent and silver by over 94 percent, while the Dow Jones and S&P 500 each only rose by around 8.5 percent.

Recent gains aside, precious metals have a number of features that make them a sound

part of a prudent investment strategy. In particular, inflation does not erode the value of precious metals in not eroded over time. Thus, precious metals can serve as a valuable "inflation hedge." Precious metals also maintain, or even increase, their value during times of stock market instability, such as what the country is currently experiencing. Thus, investments in precious metals can help ensure that an investment portfolio maintains its value during times of economic instability.

Federal employees could greatly benefit from the protection against inflation and economic downturns provided by prudent investments in precious metals. I therefore once again urge my colleagues to cosponsor the Thrift Savings Fund Improvement Act.

#### HONORING SERGEANT KRISTOPHER JAMES GOULD

### HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 17, 2011*

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the memory of Sergeant Kristopher James Gould of Frankenlust Township in Michigan. Kristopher paid the ultimate price in service to his country on February 27, 2011 in Afghanistan.

Sergeant Gould joined the Michigan Army National Guard in 2003. He served in Iraq from 2005 to 2006. He joined the US Army in 2007 and was serving his second tour of duty in Afghanistan when his unit was struck by an improvised explosive device. Kristopher was assigned to the B Company, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, Fort Knox, Kentucky. He was a 2004 graduate of Valley Lutheran High School and his funeral was held at Bethlehem Lutheran Church on Saturday, March 12th.

James and Ann Gould, Kristopher's parents, would like to thank the Casualty Assistance Officer, Sergeant Angelina Saldana, of the Michigan Army National Guard for her assistance during this time. She escorted them to Dover Air Force Base, and coordinated the military honors with the church. Mr. and Mrs. Gould were touched by her compassion and her support of the family during this time.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to stand with me in a moment of silence and remember the life of Kristopher James Gould and the service he rendered to our country. His sacrifice for the United States of America cannot be measured, and we owe him our thanks and gratitude. Please join me in offering prayers and condolences to his parents, sister and family for their loss.

#### STEPHEN F. MESTAS TRIBUTE

### HON. SCOTT R. TIPTON

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 17, 2011*

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Chief Warrant Officer Stephen F. Mestas of Pueblo, Colorado. Officer Mestas is a helicopter combat pilot who just finished his second tour of duty in Afghanistan, and his fifth tour overall. His return is a reminder of

the sacrifice our soldiers and their families make to ensure our freedoms.

Officer Mestas and his unit, Alpha Troop 2-17 Cavalry, were recently deployed into some of the most dangerous territory in the world. They put their lives in danger every day so that we may live safely and freely in America. The fact that officer Mestas has been deployed five times in that pursuit is both humbling and inspiring. We are truly indebted to these brave men.

I also feel profound respect for the wives, children, parents and siblings of our American soldiers. They are put through incredible difficulties and we owe them the same gratitude.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize Stephen Mestas, today. He and his family keep this country strong, along with all of the other men and women we charge with protecting the United States of America.

#### RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF OUR DAILY BREAD

### HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 17, 2011*

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Our Daily Bread, and to congratulate them on their 26 years of service in the Northern Virginia community.

Our Daily Bread is a volunteer-based organization dedicated to providing critical services to families and individuals suffering from financial hardship. Through robust community support from local faith-based groups, community organizations, local businesses, schools and universities, Our Daily Bread has grown to provide food, financial literacy education and assistance, school supplies, and holiday cheer to thousands of people in our area.

Our Daily Bread's mission is to identify and address the unmet fundamental needs of Fairfax area residents, and to empower the community to help our neighbors maintain self-sufficiency. This mission of sustainability and self-sufficiency evolved from humble beginnings. Our Daily Bread was founded in 1984 as a temporary homeless shelter that rotated among several area churches. When Fairfax County opened a county-run shelter in the Reston area, Our Daily Bread refocused its energies on feeding the homeless and opened a soup kitchen to serve those most in need. Recognizing the difficulties faced by those patrons unable to benefit from this service, Our Daily Bread again reinvented itself first by delivering sandwiches made by volunteers and later to delivering supplemental groceries directly to homeless families who were living in motels along Route 50 in Fairfax.

Our Daily Bread has a history of being dynamic in the face of changing demographics. Beginning in the 1990's and largely fueled by the high cost of rental housing, a new urgent need emerged. Families who were not homeless, families in which one or both parents were often juggling multiple jobs, were finding themselves unable to meet their basic needs and were just one crisis away from homelessness. Our Daily Bread rose to meet this challenge and began a program offering emergency financial assistance in the form of a modest one time grant of up to \$350.00. More recently, Our Daily Bread expanded their services to provide financial mentoring, a back to